



# Solidarity

For social ownership of the banks and industry

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## FOR CORBYN, FOR SOCIALISM!

What the  
activists  
say:  
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## What is the Alliance for Workers' Liberty?

Today one class, the working class, lives by selling its labour power to another, the capitalist class, which owns the means of production. Society is shaped by the capitalists' relentless drive to increase their wealth. Capitalism causes poverty, unemployment, the blighting of lives by overwork, imperialism, the destruction of the environment and much else.

Against the accumulated wealth and power of the capitalists, the working class has one weapon: solidarity.

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty aims to build solidarity through struggle so that the working class can overthrow capitalism. We want socialist revolution: collective ownership of industry and services, workers' control and a democracy much fuller than the present system, with elected representatives recallable at any time and an end to bureaucrats' and managers' privileges.

We fight for the labour movement to break with "social partnership" and assert working-class interests militantly against the bosses.

Our priority is to work in the workplaces and trade unions, supporting workers' struggles, producing workplace bulletins, helping organise rank-and-file groups.

We are also active among students and in many campaigns and alliances.

We stand for:

- Independent working-class representation in politics.
- A workers' government, based on and accountable to the labour movement.
- A workers' charter of trade union rights — to organise, to strike, to picket effectively, and to take solidarity action.
- Taxation of the rich to fund decent public services, homes, education and jobs for all.
- A workers' movement that fights all forms of oppression. Full equality for women and social provision to free women from the burden of housework. Free abortion on request. Full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. Black and white workers' unity against racism.
- Open borders.
- Global solidarity against global capital — workers everywhere have more in common with each other than with their capitalist or Stalinist rulers.
- Democracy at every level of society, from the smallest workplace or community to global social organisation.
- Working-class solidarity in international politics: equal rights for all nations, against imperialists and predators big and small.
- Maximum left unity in action, and openness in debate.
- If you agree with us, please take some copies of *Solidarity* to sell

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# Hutchison dockers step forward

By Martin Thomas

Mark Jack, Hutchison Ports worldwide Executive Director and Managing Director for South East Asia and Australia, came to Sydney on 26 August. The 97 wharfies (dockers) sacked in Brisbane and Sydney still didn't get straight answers from Hutchison, but the union made progress.

If the union presses on with plans for sustaining, increasing, and varying the campaign in the next weeks, then the wharfies can win.

The 97 — 41 in Brisbane out of an operations and maintenance workforce of 84, and 56 in Sydney out of 122 — were sacked by text messages and emails at 11:30pm on 6 August telling them never to turn up to work again.

The talks between the MUA (Maritime Union of Australia) negotiating team (which included two rank-and-file delegates) and Hutchison got an undertaking that the 97 are to be kept on wages up to 14 October, and that the issues will be conciliated or if necessary arbitrated through the Fair Work Commission.

There will be further talks Monday-Wednesday, 31 August to 2 September. The union is waiting on business plans to be supplied from Hutchison in Hong Kong.

Mark Jack admits that mismanagement at the top has been central to Hutchison's problems in Australia.



Brisbane dock workers and supporters protest at Vodafone, 28 August

Queensland MUA state secretary Bob Carnegie says: "With him leading the Hutchison negotiations, we are talking with a person who understand the industry and understands the problems both sides are facing. We may bitterly disagree; but it is infinitely better than trying to work things through with the current Hutchison Australia HR team, who have tried to drive an extreme right-wing ideological attack upon employees and the MUA."

**UNION STRENGTH**  
Union negotiators have made it clear that the MUA has the strength to ensure that Hutchison cannot even think of running a non-union operation in Australia. Hutchison's talk of mothballing the terminals has receded.

Influential in making Hutchison think again were the Vodafone protests on 26 August. MUA members, with tremendous support from CFMEU construction members from city centre sites, protested and leafleted outside outlets for Vodafone, which in Australia is 50% owned by Hutchison since they folded their own "3" mobile phone franchise.

Jack agreed to a Memorandum only slightly amended from what he backed out from at the last minute in previous talks on 20 August.

The case in the Federal Court which was to open from 1 September has been adjourned.

Hutchison had already subcontracted-out all their customers for six weeks, before declaring the redundancies, and in the negotiations they threaten to mothball the entire operation. Only now have they started to bring a few containers for export into the terminals.

From the morning of 7 August, a crowd often of hundreds and in daytime rarely of fewer than a couple of dozen has sustained 24/7 community assemblies at the terminal gates in Brisbane and Sydney. There have been large contingents from other unions — the ETU, CFMEU construction and mining divisions, AMWU, United Voice — students, and left-wing activists.

The not-quite-what-was-first-reported Federal Court decision on 13 August, and pressure from the national union leadership to avoid "unprotected" industrial action which could lead to fines and claims for damages, have damped down the assemblies since then, but dozens of wharfies continue to protest at the termi-

nal gates 24/7.

In Brisbane, the wharfies rostered on for each shift have gone to work, but marched in to the terminal cheered by the other workers and supporters and carrying union flags, or left the terminal for their morning meal break to eat with their workmates on the protest line.

In work, they have monitored the refrigerated containers, but insisted on full observance of safety requirements where previously corners were cut. The first day, management returned every couple of hours to try to instruct the workers, but of late the local managers, who seem not in the loop of the Hutchison top bosses' discussions, have retreated to their office.

Renewed pressure on Hutchison will require re-mobilising big broad turnouts for the terminal-gates assemblies, and organising protests at other Hutchison businesses like Vodafone Australia.

The Brisbane wharfies have met regularly at the terminal gates. They have elected a committee, though in practice that hasn't get much further than being a list of people responsible for different jobs. Their new union state secretary, Bob Carnegie, has provided unusually astute and democratically-minded leadership.

Almost all the Hutchison operations and maintenance workers are members of the union, the MUA, Maritime Union of Australia. That high union density is not unusual on the waterfront. Unusual is the solidarity which has enabled the action to be "carried" by workers who haven't been sacked going into work in small shift groups (10 or so at a time) and defying management pressure.

World container traffic is growing much more slowly than it did up to 2008, and with China's economic downturn that trend is unlikely to reverse soon. Hutchison's ports operations are still profitable overall, but Hutchison's Australian management wanted to break union organisation and beat down conditions in order to cut costs.

Hutchison's \$750 million investments in the two terminals, opened in 2013, provide the workers with their point of pressure to defend their organisation.

## Fit for work?

By Gemma Short

More than 90 people a month are dying shortly after being declared fit to work by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

Statistics released by the DWP, after a freedom of information request, showed that between December 2011 and February 2014 2,380 people who had their employment and support allowance (ESA) stopped when a work capability assessment found they were "fit for work" died shortly after.

Still the DWP is defending these figures, claiming they "prove no causal effect between benefits and

mortality".

Earlier in the same week the DWP was heavily criticised for a leaflet which contained quotes about positive experiences of the welfare system from fictitious characters. Some of the quotes described how the fictitious characters felt benefit sanctions helped them by encouraging them to write their CV. The reality is that draconian benefit sanctions leave people in need penniless.

**With £12 billion to be cut from welfare, Iain Duncan Smith has said he aims to get one million people who currently claim ESA into work. He also plans to toughen up work capability assessments!**





# Open the borders! Workers unite and fight!

By Vicki Morris

**The latest shocking pictures of hundreds of people drowned off the Libyan coast trying to make their way to a better life in Europe, or suffocating to death crammed together in the back of a lorry on an Austrian motorway, are galvanising EU leaders.**

But only to discuss “burden-sharing”. Or how to separate the wheat — refugees from the wars in the Middle East — from the chaff — economic migrants.

It is good that Germany has said Syrians can claim asylum in Germany regardless of where they first register within the EU. As many as 800,000 Syrians end up making their home in Germany.

But what is to be the fate of those who are not from Syria, but from Afghanistan or Somalia? The EU leaders are not doing enough!

The UN estimates that at the end of 2014 a record 59.5 million — 1 in every 122 — people in the world are displaced. 86% of those forced from their countries are living in economically less developed countries. Turkey hosts 1.6 million refugees, most from Syria, more than any other country. The next biggest host nation is Pakistan, with 1.5 million from Afghanistan. Lebanon hosts the most in relation to its population: 232 per 1,000 inhabitants.

The numbers of displaced

people have risen 13% since 2013; by 59% since 2004.

The four-year war in Syria accounts for much of the recent figure: 3.9 million Syrians live as refugees in the Middle East and farther afield; 7.6 million are displaced within Syria. At least 220,000 people have died in the Syrian conflict.

This is, as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) put it, an “age of unprecedented mass displacement”.

UNHCR has responsibility for, among others, 3.9 million Syrians, 2.6 million Afghans, and 1.1 million Somalis, all coming from countries ravaged by war. In Iraq in 2013 there were 1 million internally displaced people fleeing Islamic State, by the end of 2014 the number had risen to 3.6 million.

## DISPLACED

**Worldwide, only 126,800 displaced persons were able to return to their home countries in 2014.**

The number of displaced persons living in Europe rose from 4.4 million in 2013 to 7.6 million in 2014. It is a large number of people, but as a proportion they make up not much more than 1% of the European population — and they are people in great need, as the lengths to which they will go to get into the EU show.

More than 219,000 people crossed the Mediterranean Sea in 2014; three times the previous high of 70,000, at



the time of the “Arab spring” in 2011. UNHCR had reports of 3,500 people dead or missing in the Mediterranean in 2014.

Estimated figures for 2015 are 300,000 so far attempting the crossing, with 2,700 people drowning when their overloaded vessels sank. Those who want to cross pay traffickers around £250 for a place.

Alternatively, people pay thousands of pounds to a succession of smugglers to take them across the Middle East, then by boat from Turkey to Greece, and then via Macedonia, Serbia and Hungary to the richer countries of the EU, such as Austria and Germany and some onward to the UK.

Several thousand are currently living in squalid camps in Calais looking for a chance to get into the UK. They run the risk of injury and death climbing aboard lorries and trains.

All along this chain of desperation, the displaced are exploited and at risk.

But the trafficking, the suffering and the misery, all of the indignity, could stop — if the EU would only open its borders!

The German Chancellor Angela Merkel is acting generously in relation to the Syrian refugees but partly because it suits the needs of German capital. Germany’s ageing population needs new workers to boost its economy, and to fund the services that older people will need when they can no longer work — problems shared by most European countries.

## CAMERON

**But this approach is much better than that of prime minister Cameron, running so scared of the anti-EU, anti-migrant UKIP that he even ignores pro-Tory business leaders who argue for the economic benefits of freer immigration.**

Cameron is making tougher controls on immi-

gration a central demand in his negotiations with the EU.

The migration crisis presents a challenge to trade unionists and socialists: will we fight for a better world and human equality, or will we argue to keep the borders, or strengthen them?

Will we argue that migration must be controlled, because new arrivals need school places for their children, treatment on the NHS, in- and out-of-work benefits, houses and jobs, and there isn’t enough to go around?

We should not: there is enough to go around if we fight for more resources for public services to meet need, and for new homes to be built; if we argue for hours of work to be cut without loss of pay, in order to create more jobs.

Who will pay for all of this? The rich can pay! We need a massive redistribution of wealth, from the rich to the working class, and from richer nations to poorer.

Will we argue that the UK

should leave the EU, because the EU is too neoliberal or because it allows workers to move between countries, undercutting wages? We should not: the EU is no more neoliberal than the UK. We can only defeat neoliberalism by fighting the ruling class of every nation and internationally. There is little evidence that labour migration undercuts wages. In any case we need a fight to level up wages and conditions across Europe and wider. We need international working-class solidarity.

The Corbyn campaign and possible Labour leadership offers a unique opportunity to push these policies.

The way the current migration crisis is presented in the media and by most politicians fuels anxiety and suspicion, racism even. We must resist these and insist on the right of all people to live in safety and dignity, to enjoy life, to care for their families, for each other.

**Open the borders!  
Workers, unite and fight!**



# China: the crash and the workers

By Colin Foster

**The bill for the Chinese government’s gaudy response to the global crash of 2008 is now falling due.**

Then, the government promoted the biggest surge of investment in roads, bridges, railways, and buildings ever seen in world history. China has built a high-speed rail network bigger than all the rest of the world’s high-speed rail put together in just the few years since 2007.

As with capitalist investment booms generally, the flipside was a rise of debt held in expectation of the returns from the investment once completed. Total debt in the Chinese economy has soared since 2008, and is now equivalent to 282% of annual economic output.

There are few returns now or likely soon on much of the investment. In late 2014 two Chinese government researchers published an estimate that 37% of Chinese investment since 2009, \$6.8 trillion worth, was wasted on building bridges to nowhere and offices or homes with no one in them. Local government authorities, which sponsored much of the investment, are in unsustainable debt. Many of the loans came from dodgy and opaque “shadow banking” outfits.

That is the background to China’s stock market crash, which started in June and accelerated on 24 August. The government instructed students at a top university’s graduation ceremony to chant: “Revive the A-shares, benefit the

people!”, but that didn’t help.

There are good reasons for doubting that August 2015 is China’s equivalent of October 1929 in the USA. China’s stock market has less weight in China’s economy than Wall St had in the USA’s in 1929.

The *Economist* magazine, though an evangel of free-market economics, thinks that the fact that China already has as permanent policy what the US and UK did as panic rescue measures in 2008 will limit the slump. “Thank the Chinese regime’s vice-like grip on its financial system... If it faced an economy-wide credit crunch, the government would (as it has in the past) simply order banks to lend more”.

The economist Nouriel Roubini, famous for “calling” the 2008 crash in advance, has been predicting a downturn in China ever since then. But even he expects total output growth of 6.5% in 2015 and around 5.5% in 2016. There are strong “virtuous spiral” trends in China: countryside-to-city labour migration, technological catch-up increasingly spinning off into autonomous technological advance, inflows of manufacturing investment.

Yet the managers of the USSR’s even more state-regulated economy found (as Jacques Sapir shows in his great study of economic fluctuations in the USSR) that such state control tends to produce a “business cycle” of investment spurges followed by cost overruns followed by clamp-downs.

The picture for China’s “workshop of the world” manu-

facturing industry is gloomier for its economy as a whole, in which services are a bigger factor than manufacturing. Investment in infrastructure still showed a yearly growth rate of over 20% in 2014; but since 2012, total industrial production in China (not including construction) has been growing at only about half its rate before 2008. Foreign direct investment inflows in manufacturing have decreased since 2011.

One of the major motives for the Chinese government’s investment surge after 2008 will have been to keep social peace. Although independent trade unions and autonomous working-class political expression are illegal in China, in recent decades the country has seen more and more worker protests and strikes, often victorious.

Inequality has increased in China. Some estimates make it the most unequal major country in the world. Yet the government has been careful to keep wage rates rising, if not as fast as profits, and to limit unemployment.

Its ability to do that will decline; and in the thousands of protests and strikes, workers will have gained confidence to make further-reaching demands.

**China Labour Bulletin reports: “In manufacturing industry, there has been a definite increase in the number of wage arrears cases since early 2014. The majority... are in the traditional manufacturing centres along the southeast coast, especially the Pearl River Delta, where factories are struggling to stay afloat as the economy slows, and prices and demand falls”.**



# Meeting the international left

AWL

By Omar Raii



From Sunday 26 July to Saturday 1 August, the 32nd International Youth Camp, organised by the Fourth International, was held in Kasterlee, near Antwerp in Belgium.

Delegations were present from France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Belgium, Greece, Denmark, Switzerland, the UK, America and others. The UK delegation was about 20 people, including three young comrades from Workers' Liberty, as well as comrades from Left Unity, NCAFC, and Socialist Resistance.

The political content of the week was divided up into 5 sections, each day being a different topic. Crisis/Youth/Class, Ecosocialism, Feminism, LGBTQIA, Racism/ Islamophobia/ Imperialism, and how to change the world. Every day started with a plenary educational in the morning, followed by a workshop given by one of the delegations, and then a plenary with speeches in the evening. Throughout the day there was time for delegations to meet one another and in the evening there were often themed parties or discos.

The sessions included one on the situation in Syria/Iraq/Kurdistan given by the Syrian comrade who was based in Switzerland. He stressed the importance of the rights of the Kurds to self-determination and the role of Iran and Assad's regime as well as of Daesh (ISIS). There was another on nuclear energy, where I got the feeling that the FI is very anti-nuclear; one on feminism and Islamophobia; one on the struggle for equal marriage and abortion rights in France; one on Ukraine with a Ukrainian comrade who was impressed with Workers' Liberty's writing on Ukraine and publicised our pamphlet on the Maidan (WL 3/47).

Each night there was a party and on the Feminism and LGBT nights they were themed.

It is common for delegations to set aside time to meet each other and discuss issues in each other's countries. We managed to meet the French (both sections), the Belgians, the Germans, the Greeks and the Spanish. One interesting thing was the remarkable similarity between the situation in Germany and the situation in Britain (in terms of the weakness of the



trade union movements).

We talked to people about the state of the far left in Britain, (mentioning Left Unity and the Corbyn campaign, and the crises afflicting the Socialist Workers Party and Socialist Party, the situation in Scotland, the EU referendum and the student movement. Only the Greek comrades seemed to be opposed to what seemed to be a general consensus of wanting to stay in the EU.

As Workers' Liberty we set up a stall with our materials. We sold lots of material, including copies of the *Fate of the Russian Revolution*, *Working Class Politics and Anarchism*, and our pamphlets on Ukraine. Our autocollants (stickers) went down well, and plenty of European comrades now have our autocollants on their notebooks!

It is clear is that the Fourth International is quite disparate, in who is involved and in politics. For example, there is a general consensus about being involved in broad left parties, but the Greek section was not involved in Syriza in the past period.

Previously Workers' Liberty, despite close links with other FI sections, has been effectively barred from attending the camp by the FI's British section, Socialist Resistance.

**We are glad that Socialist Resistance have now abandoned their ridiculous sectarian policy of "banning" Workers' Liberty and look forward to working more closely with comrades in the FI in future.**

## Government will not adopt "open door"

The humanitarian crisis of desperate migrants in Calais, mass drownings in the Mediterranean off Greece and Italy, and barbaric razor-wire fence-building in Hungary, all demand a serious, compassionate and realistic response from the left.

*Solidarity's* response (19 Aug), "The British government should help the migrants come to the UK" is admirable in principle. But, realistically, Cameron and the Tories are not going to adopt an "open door" policy towards migrants. Indeed, it's highly unlikely that *any* UK government (even one led by Jeremy Corbyn) would adopt such a policy.

It is obvious that the only realistic possibility of resolving the present migration crisis in a fair, humane and rational manner will involve increased EU co-operation and integration.

Migrants should be allocated between EU member states on the basis of a country's wealth, size and number of migrants of the same heritage already settled in a given state. This approach would inevitably mean countries (like Britain) that have previously experienced relatively low levels of immigration having to accept more. As has been shown by both the deal forced on the Greeks and the unsuccessful attempt to agree a similar agreement earlier this year, such solidarity is not always forthcoming: more EU integration is the only possible way forward.

**The reason the British government opposes any such arrangement is that it would mean taking in more asylum seekers. The Tories put cutting immigration figures and being seen to oppose European integration ahead of seeking a rational and humane solution. But the left should demand that they co-operate with the rest of Europe in reaching such an arrangement.**

Jim Denham, Birmingham



## Where did the Trotskyists go after Trotsky?

**Our new book, *The two Trotskyisms confront Stalinism*, is out next week.**

For the revolutionary socialists, the Trotskyists, it has been a very long march through the 20th century and beyond, and over sometimes uncharted, unexpected, terrain. Central to it has been the fight against Stalinism, the attempt to understand it, the battle to wipe the labour movement clean of it. This book documents the formative debates between the two main strands into which Trotskyism divided in the 1940s.

This book is the follow on from *The Fate of the Russian Revolution, Volume 1* which was published in 1998. This second volume collates documents from the movement which kept

alive and developed the revolutionary socialist politics which Trotsky fought for. Just before Trotsky's death, the American Trotskyist organisation split after a dispute triggered by Stalin's invasion of Poland. The majority was led by James P Cannon, the minority by Max Shachtman. Shachtman's "heterodox" side would later reject Trotsky's analysis of Russia as a "degenerated workers' state"; although that was not their view at the time of the split. Cannon's "orthodox" side continued to hold onto the degenerated workers' state position in face of changed realities, and from that would flow many political errors.

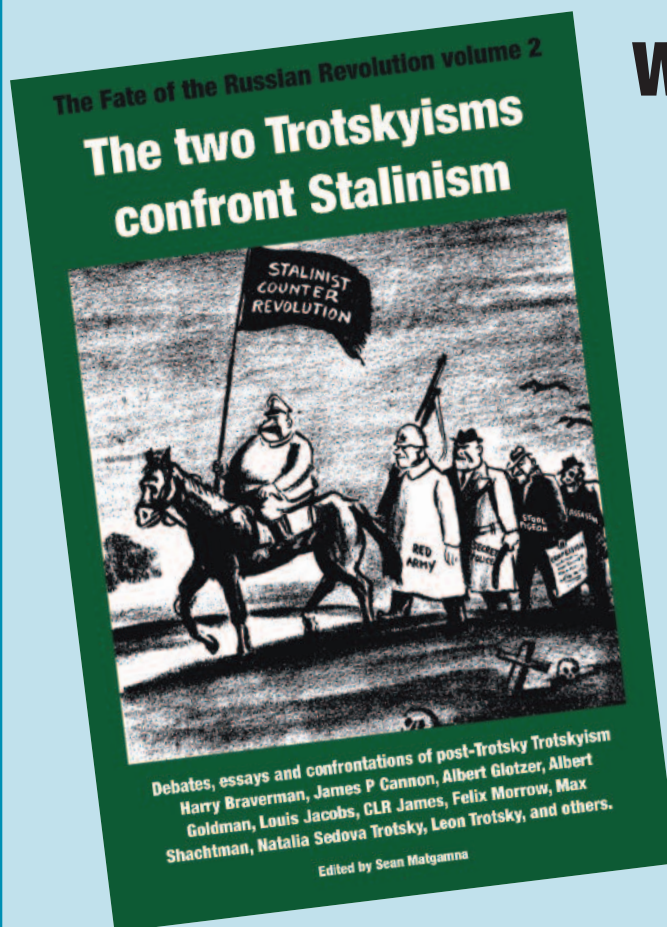
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**[bit.ly/TwoTrotskyisms](http://bit.ly/TwoTrotskyisms)**



The front page of the Shachtmanite newspaper, *Labor Action*, after Trotsky's death.



# Overhaul the Labour left!

**Tens of thousands of people have rallied to Jeremy Corbyn's Labour leadership campaign.**

Older Labour supporters whose left-wing views were not extinguished by Blairism, trade unionists who want a working class-centred politics, radicals who previously voted Green in frustration with Ed Miliband's Labour, far left activists, big numbers of unaffiliated young people and students and many others have got behind Corbyn.

To rally and organise a substantial number of these people after 12 September requires the Labour left to go beyond its existing valuable but small organisations and create a more united and expansive structure.

Already there are a number of local organisations, some of them quite vibrant, organising the Corbyn campaign in their city or town. These campaigns involve a wide range of activists and are not affiliated to one of the existing Labour left groups. A new national organisation would help such local structures grow and develop, coordinate them nationally and provide more space for them to discuss demands and ideas.

Young Labour Party activists are moving forward, with the Labour Campaign for Free Education initiating a broad conference on 20 September. It looks as if the youth sections of other Labour left organisations will be supporting it too. Young people in Scotland have created a Scottish Labour Young Socialists network and youth groups are now appearing in English cities. The existing Labour left should get behind these developments.

The Corbyn movement has things in common with other left movements in Europe that have emerged in Europe since the economic crisis began in 2008 – particularly Syriza and Podemos. After years of advance for the right in many countries, a considerable minority of people are drawing broadly left-wing conclusions about capitalism. In Britain, the Labour leadership election and the Corbyn campaign have created a lightning rod for much of this sentiment. Without boldness and flexibility about developing left organisation, there is a danger of it dispersing, and particularly so if Corbyn is not elected. If he is elected, and there is no strong democratic organisation behind him, there is a political danger of it all going wrong, as what has happened in Greece shows.

We want a united, democratic movement not just from more abstract considerations, but because it is necessary to put pressure on Corbyn, make sure his promises are implemented and push for more radical policies.

A new Labour left movement, whatever form it takes, will be immediately confronted by a number of live issues.



Many hundreds of councillors support Corbyn. If he wins, what will they do about new rounds of Tory cuts, which will be even worse than those of 2010-15? We advocate that Labour councils resist implementing the cuts, and help workers and communities rally, locally and nationally, to demand the Tories restore funding. The Councillors Against the Cuts movement created in 2012 should be refounded, this time on a much bigger scale and with the support of the national Labour Party.

Will Corbyn's party full-throatedly support strikes and working-class struggles, or will it hem and haw as the campaign did during the last round of Tube strikes?

There is the big issue of party democracy. The left should oppose concessions to the Parliamentary Labour Party and party machine on democratisation. We should fight for Labour Party conference to become fully sovereign, for the undemocratic system of Policy Forums to be abolished and for all bans on left-wing organisations and individuals who want to join and support the party to be rescinded. We need a much more responsive system of reselections so that rank-and-file activists can hold accountable and if they want replace MPs and councillors who resist moving the party to the left.

A renewed, united, democratic Labour left is also necessary to debate what policies we want to use party democracy to push forward.

Workers' Liberty will continue to education, agitate, organise and recruit for our revolutionary socialist, Marxist ideas. At the same time we ask that others on the Labour left be true to their ideas, and argue and fight for them. Class struggle and socialism should not be ideas we exchange amongst ourselves in private or mere rhetoric to occasionally rouse the faithful before getting on with managing capitalism. We need to debate how these kinds of ideas can be made a, shaping force in politics. After years of political retreat such explicit radicalism is awkward, but necessary.

We need to put debates about capitalism, class and class struggle back into political mainstream.

We should use renewal of the Labour left to debate issues of disagreement on the left – like international conflicts (where Corbyn combines some reasonable positions with the widespread "left" softness on reactionary anti-Western movements) and most urgently, Europe.

Immediately, we advocate the party fights for an Emergency Plan to protect and benefit the working class and the workers' movement, and help us organise. Tax the rich to rebuild public services; renationalise privatised public utilities with workers' control; restore and improve benefits; repeal all anti-union laws; nationalise the banks; end deportations and detention. These sorts of policies are the very least we should demand from a Corbyn-led Labour government. Going back to the Labour Party of the early 1970s is not a good model. The left should fight for a government which is accountable to the labour movement and serves the working class, a workers' government.

A Corbyn-led party will face a huge assault from the ruling class, political establishment and media, or about the fact that since Blair public opinion has in some respects moved to the right. The point is that left-wing and even socialist policies can convince the "centre ground" – which is not an ideologically fixed right-wing location, as Blair would have us believe. The labour movement and left should seek to persuade the working class through campaigning and thoughtful advocacy.

If Corbyn wins socialists should argue for uniting the labour movement around the Labour Party, while organising for democracy, working-class interests and socialist politics within it.

**We should support trade unions affiliating to the party, starting with a fight for the politically very important re-affiliation of the unions pushed out under Blair, the FBU and RMT.**

## End bans in the Party!

**The right-wing Labour Party group Progress has its own distinct program, its own national, regional and local events, its own website and its own publications. No one in the Labour Party suggests banning it. On the contrary, it has been fêted by all kinds of party dignitaries, including three of the four candidates for leader.**

Meanwhile some socialist organisations are proscribed. In stages between 1982 and 1985 the party banned Militant (now split into Socialist Appeal and the much larger Socialist Party, which is outside Labour). In 1990 it banned Socialist Organiser, as Workers' Liberty was then called, going on to expel a number of our members as well as a number of Labour Party people who weren't!

One of our comrades was barred from standing again as the parliamentary candidate for Wallasey, despite losing only by a hair's breadth in 1987 and receiving the vast majority of local party and union support, and Angela Eagle was imposed in clear violation of the party's own rules.

These bans (under Neil Kinnock's leadership of the Party) were major steps towards transforming the Labour Party, leading to Tony Blair imposing an authoritarian organisation.

These bans were pushed through with the help of the big trade unions. The ban on Socialist Organiser was opposed by a majority of local parties but only a few small left unions.

**Lifting bans and allowing freedom of organisation in the party is an essential part of democratising it and pushing forward any left-wing agenda.**

## Why I am appealing my expulsion

**By Daniel Randall**

**I joined the Labour Party in 2006, and have been a member ever since.**

From 2004 to 2013, I was a member of, and active in, two Labour-affiliated trade unions (Unison and GMB). During this election campaign, I successfully proposed that my current union, the RMT, support the Labour candidate in my constituency (Tulip Siddiq in Hampstead and Kilburn).

Having not received my ballot papers for the current leadership election, I rang the Labour Party to enquire as to their whereabouts. I was told that I wouldn't be receiving them, as my "membership had been cancelled" — in other words, that I had been expelled from the party.

The person on the other end of the phone apparently didn't know why; she read out a long list of possible reasons, and told me it would all be explained in a letter that was on its way to me. I was notified by email.

The problem was this: I am also a member of the Alliance for Workers' Liberty (AWL), a socialist organisation descended from another group, Socialist Organiser, which was banned by the Labour Party in 1990 during the last witch-hunt against the far left. My membership of AWL has never been a secret, but it's never been an issue for the Labour Party until now — when I have a chance to contribute, by voting for Jeremy Corbyn in the leadership election, to a political earthquake that threatens the power of the Blairite cadre that controls the Labour Party machine.

There has been much talk around the leadership election

about the "aims and values of the Labour Party", and who does and does not support or represent them. For me, the fundamental and foundational aim of the Labour Party is simple: to give organised labour a voice in politics, to allow us to express ourselves in the political sphere, through a party based on and accountable to our unions, just as our employers historically used the Liberal and Tory parties.

The "values" of the Labour Party, meanwhile, have always been a contested terrain, and for too long they have been based on total accommodation to an ideological framework dictated by the Tories. This leadership election is a chance to begin changing that. No wonder the architects of that accommodation are running scared.

I will be appealing my expulsion, because I believe that a Labour Party that cannot accommodate me, and the 100,000 other left-wing members and supporters like me who have been expelled as part of this election, but can accommodate the likes of Blair and Mandelson — super-rich class warriors for neo-liberal capitalism — must be overhauled and transformed.

Whatever the outcome on 12 September, the Blairite blockade on Labour Party politics has been decisively broken. We — socialist trade union activists — have an opportunity to remake the political labour movement as a force capable of radically altering society, of governing in the interests of our class in as partisan a way as the current government governs in the interests of capital.

**That work does not end, but begins, with the election of Jeremy Corbyn as Labour leader.**



# For Corbyn, for socialism!

*Solidarity* spoke to activists about the new possibilities for left and socialist politics, opened up by Jeremy Corbyn's campaign.

## Back to trade union roots

**Martin Mayer, Unite NEC member and Chair of Unite United Left**

With Jeremy Corbyn as leader, the Labour Party should no longer be ashamed of its trade union roots. We can expect to see a Labour leader standing side by side with trade unionists in opposition to the Tories new anti-union laws; and a future Labour government committed to the restoration of trade union rights and a proactive strategy to restore collective bargaining as the norm for regulating wages and distributing wealth.

## Socialist values

**Diane Jones, Red Labour Newcastle**

We need to try to build a united left front within the party and linking with trade unions, harnessing the massive enthusiasm that Jeremy Corbyn's campaign has generated and I hope, linking it with Red Labour.

I've heard many signed up Labour "supporters" say that they'll join the party if Corbyn wins. Even if he doesn't win, the ideas have been unleashed and nothing will ever be the same again. We need to encourage people to join anyway and to emphasise the need for activism in branches and CLPs to keep socialist values and policies on the agenda everywhere.

We can support members to do that. Also, we won't all agree on everything, but let's please try not to split into factions.

## Women's rights on the agenda

**Lisa Clarke, feminist activist and Broxtowe CLP campaign officer**

Corbyn has opened up a discussion about women's rights ignored and at times derided by many Westminster politicians. I have seen a lot of positivity and hope in the feminist community. Hope that these words will finally turn into actions, and that we will see issues from equal pay, to violence against women, to domestic policy and childcare finally given the attention they deserve.

## New affiliations

**Cheryl Pidgeon, Labour candidate in South Derbyshire in May 2015**

I would like to see a massive fundraising campaign organised for the next general election. We can have brilliant policies and great activists but we will need huge sums of money to ensure Jeremy and a socialist government can become a reality. I think we would attract new affiliations and reaffiliations.

## New economics

**Prue Plumridge, Maldon CLP Secretary**

My focus would be on the importance of re-framing the economic debate from the dominant economic/political language which has been framed in neoliberal terms for decades. It has been a very cleverly executed transformation and so even politicians who want change and are proposing radical ideas are still stuck in the neoliberal framing of deficit reduction and book balancing which cannot facilitate a new way of thinking.

## Unite the left

**Daniel Nichols, Romford CLP**

We need to form a strong, united left movement in the CLPs and trade unions as quickly as possible to fight for our politics and resist any coup attempts from the right.

## Reform democracy

**Lisa Banes, Sheffield Labour Activist**

We need to be promoting extensive reform in how our entire governance system works. Corbyn wants widespread consultation with members and a bottom-up approach to policy — perhaps this could be the first thing under discussion. Under our current system politics is horribly under-representative, partly because selection processes are unfairly skewed to give the wealthy an advantage (time off work, expensive printing costs for leaflets).

It also effectively means that those with young children need to either leave them with an alternative family carer, assuming one's available, pay for an expensive nanny, or move their entire family to London, which is incredibly expensive. Until these problems are addressed, and more besides, we'll never be truly representative and the working classes as well as women with children will continue to be effectively locked out of Parliament.

## Broad campaign

**Simon Heywood, Chesterfield Labour and UCU officer**

Corbyn won't get far, in my opinion, without a big, broad, active unified campaign behind him, broad enough to include elements of the Labour right and inspiring enough to

galvanise ex-Labour voters including UKIP and stubbornly resistant non-voters, those eligible to vote but unregistered, etc.

## No dirty tricks

**Cllr Chris Spence, Red Labour Stoke**

We need to organise collectively in our CLPs and in our communities, and ensure the Party hierarchy doesn't use "politics as usual" dirty tricks to undermine the largest democratic mandate ever given to a leader of the Labour Party.

## Investment not cuts

**John Burgess, Barnet Unison Secretary and candidate for General Secretary of Unison**

In my opinion, he should carry on with what he has already begun, which is to continue to expose the austerity agenda and develop an alternative anti-austerity programme. It is this work which would be crucial to defeating the racist attacks on refugees by the right wing press.

He needs to quickly align the Labour Party with already growing anti austerity grassroots campaigns. It is the work in the community that will build the grass roots support needed to ensure the Tories are defeated in 2020. This work is critical to bring back voters turned off by the current behaviour of mainstream politicians.

He needs to inspire hope that positive change can happen for everyone in our communities.

I'd expect him to work closely with those trade unions prepared to take the fight against austerity measures hitting our members, public services and communities.

# Giving hope to the labour movement

**Sean Hoyle, former RMT Executive member and candidate for RMT President**

**I first met Jeremy Corbyn a number of years ago. He and John McDonnell are amongst the only Labour politicians I've had any time for.**

I was with Bob Crow the day RMT was expelled from the Labour Party for backing the Scottish Socialist Party, and I thought that was the death of the Labour Party as far as the RMT was concerned.

But having served on the RMT Executive, and worked with Jeremy, who is a member of our Parliamentary Group, through our Political Sub-Committee, I know he is a man who lives by his principles. He is not a "bumper sticker statement"-type politician. He is committed to the labour movement. His campaign has given hope to people who'd given up. It's given people something to vote for, something that they can believe in.

For me, from an RMT point of view, it's not about us coming back to Labour, it's about Labour coming back to us. We founded what became the Labour Party, but it was transformed into something completely different. Thatcher was right to say that her biggest achievement was Tony Blair!

I'm a traditional Labour supporter, but I've stood against Labour on a socialist platform, as part of the Trade Union and Socialist Coalition (TUSC), which Bob Crow launched, because I felt the

Labour Party didn't represent working-class interests. Jeremy Corbyn's campaign is about bringing the Labour Party back to where it should be — back to us, working-class people and our unions.

For a generation or more, we've been up against a Labour Party that's essentially been Tory-lite. That could be about to change, but it won't happen overnight. It might be a slow process, and I don't think the Parliamentary Labour Party will accept a Corbyn victory. They'll work against him. You can see that in the way the party machine has moved to expel so many members and supporters: I signed up as a Labour supporter, but was denied a vote. Jeremy's trade union support will be vital in resisting attempts to undermine him, and I hope that the big Labour-affiliated unions which backed him, such as Unison and Unite, come good on that support and stand up for him.

There needs to be a political shift. It's no good having a great leader if the political approach of New Labour remains intact. The first thing we'd need a Corbyn-led Labour Party to do would be to support a real campaign against the Tories' new anti-union laws.

We know what Jeremy stands for: nationalisation, getting rid of Trident, closing tax loopholes and increasing taxation of the rich, ending austerity. We can achieve those things. Ultimately, we only need to look at the numbers, working class versus ruling class.

**We, the working-class, are the overwhelming majority. There are more of us than there are of them.**

## Restore public sector

**Dave Green, National Officer Fire Brigades Union**

**Over the past 20 years the public sector has been demonised by a succession of politicians, to the point where we are not only defending our jobs against cuts but the work we do in the eyes of the public who have been sold lies about our pay and pensions.**

The Labour Party should restore the whole public sector, so it is once again the country's crown jewels. There should be a rolling back of privatisation across the public sector, and a return of what has been privatised to public hands; a reestablishment of free education — up to degree level; reinvestment in the NHS.

**Proper reinvestment is needed after 20-30% cuts that have completely devastated our services and left us limping by on a limb and a prayer, hoping nothing terrible happens.**





## The return of class politics

By Vida Rose, Young Labour activist

**Who imagined it, back in May 2015 when the leadership contest started? We all remember the early nightmare of the first candidate line-up, our distaste at having to decide which bland manager of capitalism would be the least bad option for our class.**

Within weeks, the Corbyn campaign blew apart all the assumptions we held about the Labour Right's potency and our own impotence. As Brecht said: "Das Große bleibt groß nicht und klein nicht das Kleine." The great don't stay great and the small don't stay small. The times have changed everything.

We see those of previously endless malleability, ready to accommodate every dictate of capitalism as an unchangeable "reality", unable to accommodate us. For them a Corbyn victory would be calamity. They are afraid because they know the in this event their refuge will be an abyss.

At the same time, there are people who had written off Labour, some for well over a decade, who told us the old stories "We need a new party of the Left", "nothing good can come from Labour". These people have been forced to reconsider their assumptions. The old beast of class and class parties has suddenly occupied centre stage in British politics. We, the irredeemables, the left-for-dead, the "they'll never get anywhere", we have come back, weapons sharpened from the bitter experiences of the last decade.

But this is not the time for banal triumphalism, rather for what Ernst Bloch terms "militant optimism", to resolve the undecided through mediated action. Nothing is final yet. We have to evaluate everything anew, test out our politics and practice in the face of a historical opportunity we must seize.

This campaign pulled a blinder on us. The momentum that the Corbyn campaign has gathered, the numbers of people it has mobilised, it is unprecedented in recent history.

There are over 500,000 new people engaged in Labour, many of them directly in-

spired by Corbyn. This is a mass movement, that with varying degrees of consciousness, gravitates towards the understanding of Labour's function as the party of a class. These people may not be socialists yet, but the struggle may make them into socialists. This is a critical moment for us. Capitalism is a continuous emergency for our class. It's our chance to make an emergency for capitalism.

The first lesson to take from this is the value of intransigence.

When we make no concessions, when we take no prisoners, we wrench the political agenda out of the hands of capitalist class and set our own terms. This strategy only works when you know what you want. To take the example of mental health policy, Corbyn committed to increasing number of mental health professionals, increasing the mental health budget and tackling wider societal problems such as homelessness and the attacks on the welfare state.

### BLAND

**These policies do more to change the debate around mental health, and my life as a mentally ill person, than bland sound bites about "raising awareness", "challenging stigma" and "parity of esteem" with no means of actually getting it ever would.**

We as Marxists understand history not as the deeds of Great Men, but as struggles of a class. There is a beautiful passage, written by Wilhelm Liebknecht (yes I'm a Second International girl, deal with it) in which he argues against the former viewpoint: "The child with his animated fantasies and his undeveloped understanding populates the world with princes, giants and wizards. He sees in everything only the extraordinary, the wonderful, smells in everything the workings of secret forces. From the same childlike or should we rather say infantile standpoint are all those, who regard human history as the product of some extraordinary men, protruding above common human measure, now better, now worse, and glimpse in every event, in every movement, the whim, the

caprice of this or that individual who, in order to be suitable for their destined role, is equipped with all possible supernatural virtues."

Needless to say, Corbyn is not prince, giant or wizard. His programme, as announced, is a response to the objectively worsening material conditions of the class, and its relative mildness is a testament to the weakness of socialist ideas. We know not one, two or hundred brilliant leaders are sufficient for the liberation of our class, it must be the work of the class itself.

That is to say, as Luxemburg put it, "the mass movement has already shown us that every step forward must be forced under the pressure of tremendous masses of workers on the streets". Social transformation neither begins nor ends at Parliament, but rather in workplaces and on streets.

This brings me onto what is fundamental: organisation. The Labour Left, as weak as it was perceived to be until very recently, has one very strong thing in its favour: it never gave up organising for internal party elections, it has a solid system and infrastructure behind it. Corbyn has the most CLP nominations for a reason, because the Left, spearheaded by the Campaign For Labour Party Democracy, has contacts in hundreds of CLPs with experience at putting forward candidates and motions.

The system is far from perfect, it remains oblique to many socialists, it is not the open and wholly collectively democratic way of organising we aim for. Only a husk of party democracy has been left after the Right emptied it of substance over decades. Corbyn's own policies seem promising in this direction, restoring power to party membership over the parliamentary party.

This is why now is the time to get involved with your CLP. MPs who wax lyrical about their function in old conservative Burkean ways should be told in no uncertain terms that their job is to enact a programme as democratically decided by the party membership.

**We need active CLP members, ready to call them to account.**

## Rebuilding Scottish Labour

Ewan Gibbs, member Scottish Labour Young Socialists

**Corbyn's campaign shows that a class-based political alternative is possible and popular.**

The biggest political meetings in Scotland all year have been Corbyn meetings. Lots of the people coming along were experienced activists coming back into the movement; a lot of them were young people who'd voted yes in the referendum, but hadn't glued themselves to a position, and they were excited to be able to vote for a party that was going to vote for what they saw as "traditional Labour values".

The influx has to be organised. Momentum from the Corbyn campaign can be carried forward into the Scottish Party. But this has to be done in an outward-facing way. Scottish Labour Young Socialists (SLYS) will fight for a socialist platform. If Scottish Labour can become associated with the politics of Corbyn, then that will be very important.

SLYS is a group of people on the left of the party who felt that for a while, after the Neil Findlay campaign, we needed to be organised. A surprisingly large section of these people were young. We wanted to organise around socialist politics and be involved in the broader labour movement. We've met a lot of people through the Corbyn campaign. We'll have a formal launch in September.

I think that after the Corbyn campaign, there will be a lot of controversy around ideological issues. Not so much about policies, but more about the argument of what is the point of the Labour Party.

[Scottish Labour leader] Kezia Dugdale has proposed a Unionist coalition of voters. One section of the party has argued for that, along with Murphy. Another wing wants to go in a different direction.

**That'll be the controversy: do we want a small-c conservative unionist party that does its best to manage local government where it holds positions, or do we want a class-based party for working-class representation in politics, for social ownership and so on — but also for a more sensible solution to the Scottish question, based on radical federalism.**

Rhea Wolfson, member of Scottish Labour Young Socialists, Glasgow

**As far as I can see, Corbyn's campaign just what we need.**

Politics in Scotland has been looking pretty dire for the past six months, due to the total monopoly of the nationalist narrative. That's been a disaster for Labour politics. Corbyn is giving us a tool to take the wind out of the nationalist sails.

The threat of the SNP is terrifying. It's like chasing a shadow, they're saying impressive left wing anti-austerity, anti-Trident things, but they feel under no obligation to do any of that. If we have a candidate who can say that we're done with all this Blairite nonsense, that we believe in a socialist narrative that's not clouded by nationalism, then we'll finally have something to offer.

I was on the doorstep during the general election in Scotland, and the strongest thing we had to offer was promising people no more referendums.

**We suffered because that was all we really had to say, and we deserved to suffer.**



# We can make activists out of rally-goers

**Pete Radcliff, Broxtowe Labour Party**

**I have travelled to a number of towns talking to party members and others about what is going on in their local Labour Parties, and what to do after the leadership election.**

Even if Jeremy Corbyn doesn't win, there will be tens of thousands of energetic new activists and the possibilities of many thousands more.

The biggest problem is the state of the constituencies. 152 constituency parties nominated Jeremy. Some were like my own in Broxtowe, where the majority of branch officers and all the constituency officers backed Corbyn, as did the members at the nomination meeting by a clear first majority.

There are other constituency parties (CLPs) which nominated Corbyn but where the constituency officers were against him.

## Don't wait to fight

**Ed Whitby, speaking at Newcastle's Corbyn rally**

**I'm a convenor for Unison at Newcastle city council. I'm also member of Unison's Northern committee, which helped win Unison's support for Jeremy Corbyn.**

Yesterday we heard that chief execs of the top 100 companies now earn 183 times more than their workers average workers. Newcastle is home to the largest foodbank.

It's estimated that 50,000 families have used it in the last two years. You can understand why public sector workers and Unison members want to fight for an alternative. Not only do we support those families; some of our workers are those families.

This is why workers need a socialist political voice, and political representatives who fight for our interests as militantly as the Tories fight for those of employers. We need a government which serves us as loyally as this government serves the rich. Our unions fund and support the Labour Party — we should demand it supports us.

I'm increasingly confident that we'll win this leadership election. But win or lose, we can't wait for a Labour government. If we wait, the Tories will crush us. The campaign to elect Jeremy must be a launch pad for a real fightback.

We need a fightback in our workplaces and industries; we need a fightback in our communities and on the streets — starting by fighting the threat of new anti-union laws and from the Welfare Bill. We need workers and all sections of our community to stand together and take action to stop the Tories in their tracks. We need to recruit a new generation to our unions and make the labour movement fit to struggle.

**The Labour Party should be an essential part of that. We should have councillors, MPs and a party leader who, instead of helping the Tories with their dirty work, stand strong with workers and communities in our struggle.**

These party officers were probably somewhat alarmed by the mobilisation of old members and new left wing members seen at the nomination meetings. Where might these new members take those parties, and what would they now expect from their representatives?

There are a surprising number of CLPs in special measures — particularly, it appears, in the West Midlands. And then there are constituencies where branches don't meet and function or where the constituency meetings have no democratic structures. Labour Party Regional Officers and the NEC were happier for the local Party to be inactive than to have activity that might be critical of the MPs or influential local councillors.

So enthusiastic Corbyn supporters will find themselves in hugely different situations in the constituency parties they join.

The newly forming left in the Party will need to support activists in all of these situations. It will need to be able to democratically co-ordinate outside the party apparatus.

Democratically — because as Jeremy Corbyn has pointed out this has to be a movement based on policies not on personalities. It is essential that that is not lost.

We must welcome in the Labour Party all working-class people who want Labour to be successful in elections. We must lift the bans on those who have in the past supported various protests votes, and end exclusions on the basis of beliefs or "values". We must have free speech in the Party, an end to proscriptions and bans on those who campaign for alternative policies as long as they support a Labour vote.

We must restore Party Conference as the sovereign policy-making body of the Party.

All MPs should be required to go through mandatory reselection between elections.

Labour should invite all unions to affiliate and give them a meaningful role in the decision-making process.

One of our greatest challenges in the Corbyn campaign is to make rally-goers into activists.

## PULL IN

**Rallies lift spirits, but they are not the best way of getting to those who have been alienated from the Labour Party for decades and whom we need to win back. There are huge numbers mystified by all politics and disoriented, and they are often pulled to UKIP and the right.**

We have known for a long time that UKIP voters aren't hardened racists. Many of those voters have concerns about growing poverty and the lack of housing and decently paid jobs. In the absence of any party addressing these issues with any urgency, they have been pulled towards UKIP.

We can pull in people both on the left and from the confused right. It will be done by running high-profile campaigns that win gains for working class people whenever we can — outside of elections. We need to demonstrate that we can not only talk optimistically about the future, but fight now and win.

It will be done by explaining in one-to-one conversations on doorsteps and stalls.

This will need to be done in the teeth of media hostility, with prominent Blairites, with ready access to the press, attacking us again and again.

We have to organise on a town-by-town and constituency-by-constituency basis. And in many CLPs that will be difficult. There are



vested interests in some of them, who will try and maintain their political power-base by obstructing new member involvement and any conversion of supporters into full members.

And we have to debate. That tradition has been stamped on in much of the Party and it is weak in the wider left, which has had a recent diet of nothing other than rallies and demonstrations.

And that debate will need to be both local and national. Corbyn will come under incredible pressure from the right in the Parliamentary Party (PLP). We will need a vigorous independent left to counteract that pressure.

There will be many views that have to be debated in the Party after decades of near silence. We must organise in the industries that we want renationalised or increasingly regulated to make sure that bosses and businesses can't undermine the purpose of rena-

tionalisations.

On international issues Corbyn's policies have understandably been greeted on the left as a breath of fresh air — which indeed they are after the slavish following of US foreign policy — based on keeping happy the powerful capitalist interests in the arms, oil and other profit-making industries.

But whilst Corbyn clearly dismisses direct military interventions by Western governments in places like Iraq and Syria, his policy is pacifistic and does not explain who can defeat the fascistic Daesh. The Kurdish community in UK particularly want him to go further than his condemnation of the Turkish government's attacks upon them and to support their secular militias fighting against the Daesh in Northern Syria/ Rojava.

Corbyn calls for two states in Israel-Palestine, but his approach is that of a well-meaning diplomat wanting to pull the various parties into negotiations and avoiding clear condemnations for fear of giving offence. We have to recognise that not only the Israeli government is an obstacle to peace; so also are the Hamas leaders in Gaza. We have to oppose not only war-mongering but also the different governments' attacks on the democratic rights of their own people: in that regard Hamas is even worse than the Israeli government.

**Above all we have to take working class politics into the very heart of working class communities. In the early 1980s, this was neglected. The Party needs to get into the workplaces and into the working class communities. Corbyn's victory, if it happens, will be where the battle will seriously begin.**

• From beestonleftie.wordpress.com

## Help us raise £15,000!

**Now *Solidarity* is weekly again after our summer break, we will be hosting the debate and discussion that will be needed even more if Jeremy Corbyn wins the Labour leadership election.**

Producing a weekly newspaper is a difficult and costly task. We need funds just to continue producing our newspaper as we currently do. If *Solidarity* is to play a role in the discussions and debates to come it may become necessary to expand, requiring more funds.

Our newspaper needs an increased circulation, otherwise the ideas contained within it are impotent. Now is the time to revive paper sales routines, or plan new paper sales. If you are selling more papers than usual, please consider sending some of the sales money to our fundraising drive.

If you are a subscriber to *Solidarity* and you think you could sell some newspapers at work, in union meetings, or campaign meetings let us know and we'll send you multiple copies. Please ask new people to subscribe to *Solidarity*.

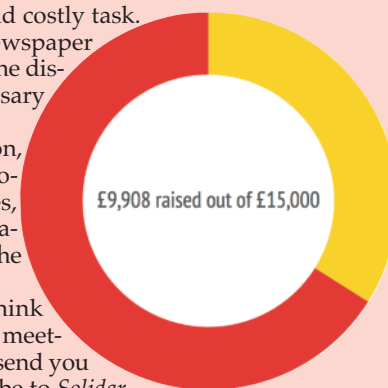
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On Sunday 6 September Camila Bassi will be hosting the "Bolshy Bike Ride" in Sheffield. If you have not already sponsored the comrades who will be taking part please do so at [anaemiconabike.bolshy-cycle-ride](http://anaemiconabike.bolshy-cycle-ride).

**Thanks this week to Jeff, Paul and to all those who came to our Summer Camp. So far we have raised £9,908.**





# How the Labour Party began

By Brian Pearce \*

**Down to the 1880s there was no “labour movement” [in Britain] in the continental sense at all. There were strong trade unions (of skilled workers), and these unions were politically-minded — but the only parties were the two ruling-class ones, the Tories and the Liberals.**

The trade unions expressed themselves politically by serving as the arms and legs of one or other of these parties — usually the Liberals, though in an area such as Lancashire and Cheshire where the employers were strongly liberal the trade unions might retort to this by supporting the Tories! The political prospect of the trade unions was to get one or other of the ruling-class parties to pass laws favourable to the workers; and they tried to consolidate their “poor-relation” influence with these parties by persuading the liberals to accept a few trade union officials among their parliamentary candidates.

During the 1880s there occurred, in a very small way at first, the rebirth of socialism in Britain after an interval of forty years. Old Chartists, reinforced by immigrant workers from Germany, had kept the flame burning in obscure clubs, but now a certain expansion began, with the establishment of the Social-Democratic Federation.

In part under the guidance of Frederick Engels, pioneer socialists began a twenty years’ propaganda for the launching in Britain of an independent class party of the workers with socialism as its aim. The setting up of the Labour Representation Committee in 1900 constituted the first breakthrough to success of a campaign which for long had seemed to many just the bee buzzing in the brains of a few cranks and fanatics, inspired by antiquated (Chartist) and foreign (German) notions. The workers learnt the hard way the need for a Labour Party.

The eventual success of the socialists’ efforts was made possible by profound changes in the economic and social situation of the British workers. It is important to get clear just what these changes were. Was it that the workers were “getting poorer” in this period between 1880 and 1900? On the contrary, these years saw a drop of about 50 per cent in the cost of living: even allowing for increased unemployment there was a big advance in real wages. In that important aspect, the workers had never had it so good!

But there was more unemployment than there had been in the previous period, and this led to a new feeling of insecurity and doubt about the social system. There was also a big drive on for speed-up and stricter discipline in the factories — American methods, as the phrase was. Increased mechanisation was undermining the strong position of the craftsmen, the skilled workers, introducing on a large scale the category of the “semi-skilled”. The growth of the scale of industrial ownership, the concentration of capital into ever-larger holdings, was reflected in greater remoteness of employer from worker and also in the appearance of an important new stratum of office workers who interposed themselves between the employers and the manual workers and came more and more to take the place of the old “aristocracy of labour”.

All these changes unsettled sections of the working class which had been most uncritically loyal to the “great Liberal party of Mr Gladstone, the people’s friend”. Other factors which came into play were a growth at the end of the nineteenth century in lavish, ostentatious spending by the ruling class, providing clear proof that whatever was happening to the poor the rich were certainly getting richer; and the rise of a generation of workers educated under the [Education] Act of 1870, who knew a lot more about the details of ruling-class life than their fathers had done.

The socialists sought out the most politically-minded rank-and-file workers in the places where they were — especially in the Radical (left-wing liberal) clubs in traditional working-class centres of that time like the East End of London. Besides their propaganda, the socialists carried on agitation around issues of interest to these workers and fights for which would help them to clear their minds of the confusions that kept them in the liberal ranks.

Struggle for trade-union organisation in trades and factories where the employers were well-known Liberals; struggle



Poster for Independent Labour Party's “Coming of Age” celebration, 1914 (21 years after its formation)

to defend and extend the right of free speech for street-corner orators and in places like Trafalgar Square, against police attempts to encroach on this right; above all the campaign for the eight-hour day. (At this time many workers worked a ten-hour day or more, and with the appearance of unemployment and the intensified strain of speed-up and so on the need for a shortening of hours was felt more and more keenly.)

The battles fought around these issues made many questions clearer to the workers who were involved in them, and prepared their minds to understand a great deal in the socialist message which previously had seemed strange and unreal to them.

## IRISH NATIONALISM

**A factor of very considerable weight in helping the idea of an independent workers’ party to take root was the example provided by the Irish nationalist party at this time.**

A small but well-disciplined group of members from Irish constituencies kept themselves independent of both of the British parties, concerned themselves exclusively with pushing Ireland’s claims for “Home Rule”, and by their obstructive tactics compelled attention to their case. Increasingly, many politically-minded British workers came round to the view that British labour needed a party of its own that would act like this.

What made up the minds of a wide section, and in particular influenced a number of trade union leaders who had no wish to take any new step unless they were obliged to by unbearable pressure, was the employers’ offensive which began in the 1890s. It was as much, or more, under the blows of the employers that these people came round as under the pull of their militant members. This was the time when the ending of Britain’s former monopoly position in the world’s markets, as “workshop of the world”, became apparent in a big way, with the rise of German and American competition.

To safeguard their developing industries the Americans even put up a tariff barrier against British goods. The reaction of British capital was twofold: on the one hand, the path of the export of capital to backward countries, with a shift from textiles to railway materials as typical goods exported, the path of “imperialism” accompanied by political and military grab; on the other, an intense drive to force down the standards of the workers at home, to make them accept unrestricted speed-up, abolition of “restrictive practices” and lower wages all round.

A wave of lockouts and provoked strikes swept the country in the 1890s. A body called the Free Labour Association was set up to organise mobile squads of assorted strikebreak-

ers (“finks” is the American term) ready to go anywhere and do anything.

Not only police but also troops were used against strikers on a scale unprecedented since Chartist times. There were shootings and killings — one case, at Featherstone, became a bitter byword in the movement, especially as a liberal Home Secretary was responsible.

In response to this sharp dose of basic political education, the idea of an independent workers’ party began to catch on in areas where it had been resisted by traditional “Radical” prejudices up to then — in particular in Yorkshire and Lancashire, key areas then for the working-class movement. “Independent Labour Unions” arose in centres like Bradford and Manchester, and working-class papers like the Workman’s Times organised to bring them together in a national association. In 1893 a big step towards the Labour Party as we know it today was taken when the Independent Labour Party came into existence as a national party aiming to win the labour movement for independent class politics.

Contrary to the legend which has been cultivated by the right wing, while the small group of British Marxists did play a part in the creation of the ILP, the Fabian Society had nothing to do with it. This latter group of reformists were still at that stage devoted to achieving socialism (or what they called socialism) through “permeation” of the Liberal Party, and they regarded the ILP as “wreckers”. Only as it became apparent that the cause of Independent Labour was going to succeed in spite of them did they change their line. The bandwagon was rolling along before they climbed on it!

At first the ruling class of this country, or its responsible representatives, did not realise the significance of what was happening. We have a very acute and very flexible ruling class, but they weren’t born that way, they had to learn it by being taught some disagreeable lessons by the workers. They don’t enjoy having to be so acute and flexible in their dealings with their workers, and would like to get rid of what forces them to act like that.

The Liberal Party, reflecting the hardened attitude of the employers towards the workers, became colder than ever towards the attempts of trade unionists to get themselves adopted as “Liberal-Labour” candidates. Some quite insulting rebuffs were handed out. This is what Ramsay MacDonald meant when he wrote explaining why such as he had taken the path of independent labour politics which they didn’t feel at all enthusiastic about: “We didn’t leave the liberals. They kicked us out, and slammed the door in our faces.”

The 1897 engineering lockout, the ruthless beating down of the engineering workers and imposing upon them humil-

\* Brian Pearce, who died in 2008, was a translator and author of many articles on working-class history.

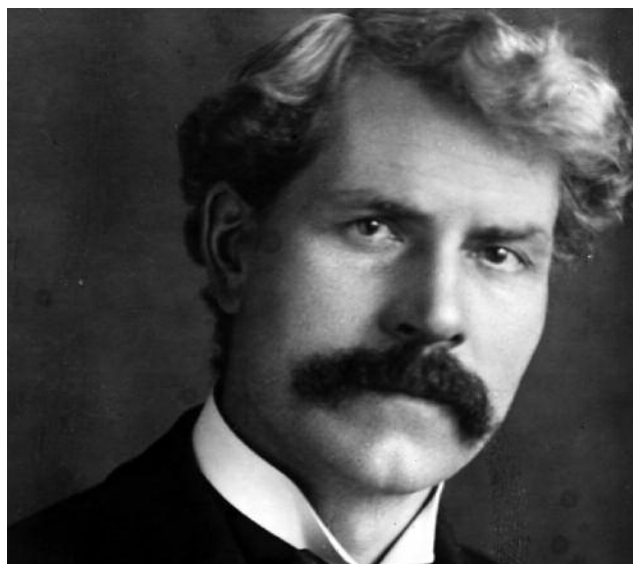


# Bourgeois Pride

**In every age the left, before it can do anything else, has to debunk the pretensions of those who hold the social and political power.**

This is especially true when the ruling class is prosperous, triumphant and confident. The British capitalist class was very confident indeed in the first decades of the 19th century, when Britain was becoming the “workshop of the world”, was mistress of the seas, and had recently conquered the French Empire of Napoleon Bonaparte. Its bourgeoisie was puffed up with pride. In those years, and for the rest of the 19th century and beyond, radicals and socialists quoted, reprinted, and recited these splendid lines from John Keats’s poem, *Isabella*. Keats pours righteous scorn on the pretensions and pride of a bourgeoisie which lives by mean and inhuman exploitation.

With her two brothers, this fair Lady dwelt,  
Enriched from ancestral merchandise,  
And for them many a weary hand did swelt  
In torched mines and noisy factories,  
And many once proud-quiver’d loins did melt  
In blood from stinging whip;—with hollow eyes  
Many all day in dazzling river stood,  
To take the rich-ored driftings of the flood.  
For them the Ceylon diver held his breath,  
And went all naked to the hungry shark;  
For them his ears gush’d blood; for them in death  
The seal on the cold ice with piteous bark  
Lay full of darts; for them alone did seethe  
A thousand men in troubles wide and dark:  
Half-ignorant, they turn’d an easy wheel,  
That set sharp racks at work, to pinch and peel.  
Why were they proud? Because their marble founts  
Gush’d with more pride than do a wretch’s tears?—  
Why were they proud? Because fair orange-mounts  
Were of more soft ascent than lazar stairs?—  
Why were they proud? Because red-lin’d accounts  
Were richer than the songs of Grecian years?—  
Why were they proud? again we ask aloud,  
Why in the name of Glory were they proud?



**Ramsay MacDonald**

iating terms of settlement, designed to make plain who was master in the works, left many of the most conservative section of the British workers in those days with little grounds for doubt that times had changed.

In 1900 the socialists of the Independent Labour Party and other groups made their historic first breakthrough into an organised relationship with the trade unions, with the establishment of the Labour Representation Committee. A limited number of trade unions at last agreed to associate with the socialist societies in promoting parliamentary candidates who should be independent of either of the ruling-class parties.

It was the ruling class which, still not grasping what was happening “down below” gave several more still-hesitant trade unions the necessary final shove to bringing them behind the Labour Representation Committee. Following a series of articles in the *Times* which called into question the very existence of trade unionism, the House of Lords upheld against appeal a judge’s decision which dealt a practical blow, in terms of hard cash, at the whole functioning of trade unions. This was the “Taff Vale judgement”, when the railwaymen’s union found themselves forced to pay out enormous damages to a company which had incurred loss through a strike they had called. If this was the law, no strike could take place anywhere on any issues without the risk of financial ruin for the union concerned.

## INDEPENDENT POLITICS

**At long last a number of trade union leaders saw the point — the working class must put itself in an independent political position from which it could compel changes in the law in its own interest, instead of relying on the sweet reasonableness of one or other group of the ruling class.**

In 1901 and 1902, after “Taff Vale”, the Labour Representation Committee received a big accession of strength — though still, it is worth recalling, the miners remained wedded to liberalism and did not come in until eight years later, after a lot of “unofficial” activity had been put in at lodge and district level. The decision to create and adhere to the Labour Party was not hastily or lightly taken by the British working class.

As already mentioned, a lot of the leading men in the movement had to be pushed every inch of the way into their new political stand, and they wanted even now to separate from the Liberals to as small an extent as possible. Few had any idea of operating as more than a pressure group — though now at least nominally outside the Liberal Party instead of inside it. They did not in the least contemplate supplanting the liberals as one of the two major parties in the country and of course there could be no question in their minds of becoming the government of the country. When, therefore, the Liberals, shocked at last into awareness of the working class getting out of hand politically, took steps through private negotiation to show themselves “conciliatory”, a man like MacDonald, secretary to the LRC, was only too pleased to meet them halfway.

MacDonald’s correspondence with the Chief Liberal Whip had to be kept a secret from all but a few of MacDonald’s colleagues, lest some crude-minded types might take exception to it. So early began the practice of talks between Labour leaders and the ruling class behind the backs of the movement as a whole. The outcome was a “gentleman’s agreement” for the LRC to restrict its candidates to certain seats, in

return for which the Liberals would not oppose them in some of these. Characteristic was MacDonald’s reaction to the news of Arthur Henderson’s victory as a Labour candidate at Barnard Castle, over both Liberal and Tory opponents: he welcomed it as strengthening his bargaining power in dealings with the Liberals, but hoped it would not encourage the “wild men” to demand openly that Labour should go it alone in every possible constituency. Just sufficient life in the working-class movement to give them something to use in horse-trading with the capitalists, and no more; that has always been the ideal of the right wing.

When, therefore, a group of 50 Labour MPs were returned in the 1906 general election, which gave a Liberal majority, there was heavy dragging of feet to do no more than accord critical support to the new government, merely pressuring it a bit in the direction of social reform. The socialists in the Labour Party (as it was now formally called) faced the task of forcing the pace against this entrenched resistance. In 1907 the socialist Victor Grayson was run as candidate, against Liberal and Tory, in a traditional Liberal seat, by local Labour organisations who defied the ban imposed by headquarters. His triumphant success encouraged the left in the movement but infuriated the “statesmen” of the Parliamentary Labour Party. A typical incident occurred in 1908 when Grayson tried to protest in the House against the welcome by the Liberal Government to a visit by the Tsar of Russia, but the official Labour spokesman at once got up to move the closure!

Nevertheless, the growth of socialist influence within the party compelled the leaders to apply for admission to the Second International, so associating the Labour Party with openly socialist parties in other countries. This was the occasion on which Lenin proposed that the Labour Party be accepted into membership of the International on the carefully-defined grounds that “it represents the first step on the part of the really proletarian organisations of Britain towards a conscious class policy and towards a socialist workers’ party.”

The fight to get the Labour Party to adopt socialism as its aim instead of merely tolerating socialists as members along with others had to go on for another ten years. Among important landmarks in this struggle was the formation of the British Socialist Party, in which the old Social-Democratic Federation came together with significant breakaway groups of the ILP in a new organisation under at least nominally Marxist leadership, and this affiliated to the Labour Party in 1914. During the First World War the BSP followed, after 1916, a different line from that of the official one of support for the war, but was not disciplined for this, much less expelled; such was the freedom for working-class trends of all kinds allowed in the party in those days as a matter of course.

The BSP was allowed to carry on its propaganda for socialism, which was helped by the harsh experiences of the workers at the hands of the Liberal-Tory coalition government. And though the Labour Party leadership accepted a place in the coalition, an attempt by Arthur Henderson, “Labour’s minister”, to keep in with the growing international anti-war feeling of the workers led to such rude treatment of him by his capitalist colleagues — the famous “doormat” incident when Henderson was kept cooling his heels outside the Prime Minister’s door till it was convenient to have him in — that life on these terms was made very hard for the Labour leaders concerned. The co-operative societies, too, which had held aloof until now, were forced during the war to align themselves with Labour by the discriminatory policy of the Government in its working of the rationing system and its application of excess profits duty.

The Russian Revolution gave the final jolt, and in 1918, at the conference of that year, the Labour Party formally adopted socialism as its aim, in the historic Clause Four of a new constitution. The right wing tried to offset this concession by depriving the socialist societies of their reserved places on the party executive, in connection with the starting of individual members’ sections, the future local Labour Parties. This ousting of the socialist societies from their place in the party was followed up in 1932 by driving the ILP right out of the party; in 1937 by banning the Socialist League, which had taken its place; and in 1946 by introducing a rule prohibiting the affiliation to or formation within the Labour Party of societies such as had initiated the very creation of the party.

The Labour Party became the chief opposition party, in 1922 and the largest party in Parliament in the following year. The first Labour Government, 1924, marked a new phase both in the advance of the working-class movement and in the degeneration of its leadership...

**Since then the party has had many ups and downs which it is not the purpose of this article to trace.**



## Fighting council privatisations

By Gemma Short

Anti-privatisation campaigners and Unite the union in the London borough of Bromley are calling for a referendum on the planned privatisation of the learning disabilities service, due to be privatised on 1 October.

Adult services staff, members of Unite, struck for 48 hours from 00.01 on Thursday 27 August. Their strike is part of ongoing strikes across council services facing privatisation.

Library staff will strike for five days starting from 00.01 on 1 September, as the council goes ahead with its plans to privatise 14 of the borough's libraries.

In a separate dispute in Bromley's already-privatised refuse collection service, workers struck on 24 August, and will strike again on 3 and 4 September. Veolia, who run the service, have continually given workers below-infla-

tion pay awards.

In the London borough of Barnet, where the Tory council is equally addicted to privatisation, workers have been informed that the council plans to make another £30 million of cuts. Workers in Barnet are already facing cuts and outsourcing in libraries, children's centres, adult social services, street scene services and the education and school meals service. In addition Barnet Unison has now been informed that a subsection of Barnet council, "Barnet group", intends to make itself into a new company which would leave staff with no access to the council pension scheme, national bargaining, and with inferior terms and conditions.

**As part of its campaign against privatisation, Barnet Unison and Barnet Alliance for Public Services, is organising a children's march for libraries on Saturday 12 September starting at East Finchley library.**



## Housing workers strike

Maintenance workers for Stoke based housing association Aspire Housing are on strike on 1 September in a dispute over the imposition of new contracts.

Aspire plans to dismiss workers and re-employ them on worse terms and conditions. The new contracts would see workers losing over £5,000 a year, facing cuts to sick pay, removal of paid allowances and working longer hours.

The workers' union, GMB, is calling on local



councillors, MPs and the public to support them and demand Aspire withdraws the new contracts.

## Tube strikes: what progress?

By Ollie Moore

Tube unions RMT, TSSA, and Unite plan further strikes on London Underground on 8 and 10 September if the company fails to offer them a settlement in their disputes over job cuts, issues relating to all-night running ("Night Tube"), and the 2015 pay settlement.

London Underground has "deferred" the launch of Night Tube, originally scheduled for 12 September, until an unspecified date in the Autumn to allow it to reach a settlement with the unions.

Strikes planned by RMT, TSSA, and Unite on 26 and 28 August were suspended after London Underground made some concessions in negotiations. Aslef, the majority union amongst Tube drivers, had already suspended its action.

LU has pulled back from some of the more drastic attacks it planned on workers' terms and conditions, especially on stations. It has also committed to decreasing the number of job cuts, although still plans to reduce staffing levels. Unions are still pushing for rostering arrangements across the



job that protect work/life balance and ensure adequate recovery time after anti-social shifts.

Rank-and-file socialist bulletin *Tubeworker* queried the suspension of the 26-28 August strikes. *Tubeworker* said: "It is good to know that progress is being made, but surely this has happened because we had industrial action on, logically suggesting that keeping it on would lead to more progress [...] The unions are rightly keen to insist

that the disputes are not over, but if that is the case, then why call off the action?"

The bulletin also argued that communications from union head offices, which initially simply told members that strikes were being suspended because "progress" had been made in talks, were inadequate: "We want to know the details: they are details about our jobs and working conditions, after all. Tube workers have shown huge

commitment to the current disputes: to keep that commitment, we need to be kept informed. Simply telling us that strikes are on, then off, then on again, inevitably starts to drain morale."

**Talks will continue right up to 7 September, with the possibility that the planned strikes may be suspended again. Any settlement reached in negotiations will have to be voted on by union members before it is finalised.**

## Gallery strikes continue Strikes for jobs and safety on FGW trains

By Peggy Carter

Workers at the National Gallery are on their 22<sup>nd</sup> day of indefinite strike, and have struck for 77 days in total, in a dispute over privatisation of some gallery services.

Workers have been on indefinite strike since 1 August. On 29 August gallery management told strikers, just three days before pay day, that they would be deducting strike pay for the whole of this month, instead of just up to the 14th as previously stated, in an attempt to force strikers back to work.

Strikers have mounted daily pickets, with support from various union branches. And have been organising solidarity with workers at the National Museum of Wales, and the National Museum of Scotland who are also in dispute.



**Sacked Gallery PCS rep Candy Udwin with London Met Unison rep Max Watson, who is facing redundancy, and Sotheby's 2 Percy and Barbara**

**On Thursday 3 September strikers will hand in their now 130,000-strong petition against the privatisation to the new gallery director, with a rally in Trafalgar Square from 1pm.**

• Donate to the strike fund — [bit.ly/FundDonate](http://bit.ly/FundDonate)

By Charlotte Zalens

RMT members on First Great Western trains struck over the bank holiday weekend in their dispute over jobs, services and safety concerns in the company's introduction of a new fleet of inter-city trains.

All workers struck for 48 hours between Saturday 29 August and Monday 31 August. This follows a 48-hour strike on 9-10 July and 24-hour strike on 23 August.

RMT has numerous concerns over the introduction of the new trains which include: lack of job protection for engineering grades, and a proposed introduction of "driver only operation" which would remove or dilute the role of guards on trains.

**Workers held picket**



**"Isambard Brunel" supporting the strikes at Bristol train station**

**lines at many key stations on the First Great Western network during the strike.**





# Solidarity

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## Continuing the Corbyn momentum

By James McAsh

**On 12 September we will find out if Jeremy Corbyn is the Labour Party leader, though any optimism is still cautious.**

Whatever the result it is already clear that the Labour Party has changed. There has been a mass influx of 400,000 new members and supporters, of which 60% are thought to be “youth”. But at the same time the situation is precarious: we urgently need to come together to ensure that these hundreds of thousands of new members and supporters do not vanish as quickly as they appeared.

If Corbyn wins he will hopefully move quickly to politically reposition the Party on the left and to introduce long-needed internal democratic reforms to empower members. However, while the Party rule-book gives plenty of authority to the Leader, the Parliamentary Labour Party will still wield a number of significant weapons. As has

already been announced in the press, some MPs will launch a public coup against the new leader. Others will undermine him in more subtle ways: leaking criticism to the press and finding excuses to not co-operate.

Even with a huge mandate behind him, the balance of power will be against Corbyn. He will only be able to drive through his policies and reforms, and maintain control of the party, if the membership is sufficiently mobilised. Huge pressure will be put on him to capitulate or to resign. No matter how principled, he will only avoid this fate if there is sufficient counter-pressure.

The Labour left is, as it stands, weak. There are plenty of existing groups – Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, Red Labour, Labour Representative Committee, Campaign for Socialism, Labour Campaign for Free Education — and many more talented individuals. But on their own they are not enough. We do



not currently have the infrastructure to support and channel the momentum and huge numbers that the Corbyn campaign has created.

### RELAUNCH

**The Labour left must be relaunched, bringing together the different groups, activists and strengths that already exist to create something bigger.**

All the relevant groups should come together to launch a new Left. Exactly how this is done, or what it looks like, is up for debate.

However we can start

with two broad principles:

It must be democratic. This does not just mean policy conferences, elections and rules — although these are important. It means a culture of inclusiveness and accessibility where everyone shares responsibility and no one individual or group is in charge, where disagreements are had out in the open, and where everyone is prepared, on occasion, to lose the argument.

It must be outward facing and campaigning. We do not need just another left-wing Labour Party faction. It is necessary but not enough to get left-wingers

elected onto Party committees, or even into Parliament. We need a mobilised membership which campaigns on the issues that matter: education, the environment, housing, pay and working conditions, trade union rights, migration, discrimination and oppression. If we want to implement the policies for which we have spent the past months arguing, then we will need to go up against powerful vested interests. We can only take on these interests with an active and mobilised population behind us.

### TRANSFORM

**Throughout history, youth and students have often played a transformative role in times of social upheaval.**

Today we must play this role in transforming the Labour Party and the Labour left. We must lead by example, in a spirit of co-operation and comradeship, and relaunch the left in Young Labour and Labour Students. In Scotland this is

already happening with the launch of Scottish Labour Young Socialists. Hopefully we can do the same for the youth and students across the UK and contribute to a reinvigoration of the left in the Party in general.

The Labour Campaign for Free Education (LCFE) is calling a meeting in London of youth and students for the 20 September — a week after the election result — to begin discussions for a new youth and student Labour left on the basis of the two principles above.

LCFE does not pretend to represent everyone. Other groups like Red Labour Youth, LRC Youth, Scottish Labour Young Socialists and the Labour Young Trade Unionist Network should co-sponsor and throw their organisational strength behind it.

**There is great potential ahead of us. Let's not squander it.**

• Originally posted on Left Futures:  
[bit.ly/CorbynMomentum](http://bit.ly/CorbynMomentum)

## Fight for the right to strike

**On 6 August the government confirmed that 3.8 million public sector workers will lose the right to have their trade union subscriptions automatically deducted from their pay packet.**

This end to “check-off”, already done to parts of the civil service, is a calculated move by the government to put unions in a financially precarious position. Whilst it may be better in the long run for unions to have their dues-collecting system far from the reach of government interference, the process of transferring workers to direct debit is long and unions may suffer a dip in income in that process.

This is only the latest in the attacks to be unveiled in the Trade Union Bill. The bill will introduce a re-

quirement of 50% turn-out in all strike ballots; and a requirement that 40% of all members (not just of those that vote) vote yes in strike ballots in “key industries” which includes health, transport, education and power. These are thresholds that the government, and many MPs, don't reach, even with all the publicity of a general election!

But there is more. The bill lifts the ban on the use of agency workers to replace strikers; it makes breaches of picketing laws criminal rather than civil offences; imposes ridiculous rules about picket line supervisors; and requires all union political funds (not just for Labour affiliated unions) to be opt-in rather than opt-out.

So far the trade union movement has made a half-hearted top down, stab at opposing the bill. A large London meeting in July hosted by the Campaign for Trade Union Freedoms, amongst others, attracted people who were keen to fight, but was largely dominated by trade union officials.

### DEMO

**The TUC has been releasing articles, petitions and graphics and has made a dedicated section of its website for the campaign.**

It has also called a demonstration at Tory Party conference on 4 October which is partially about the Trade Union Bill, and a lobby of Parliament about the bill on 2 November.

But a weekday lobby of Parliament by trade union officials is not going to stop the bill. Localised action, that embarrasses MPs, raises public awareness and involves members will stand a chance. That sort of activity will also build confidence and organisation amongst rank and file trade union members, to reinvigorate our movement and better enable us to beat the bosses at work and defy the bill if it is passed.

Mobilising groups have been set up by trade union branches in London, Liverpool, and Sheffield so far.

Trade union branches and trades councils should do the same elsewhere, with the aim of co-ordinating local activity. In London we organised a successful protest outside



Right to Strike demonstration on 8 August

Iain Duncan Smith's constituency office — taking a “high court judge” to give him an injunction against his election with only 31% of the electorate!

On Wednesday 9 September we will be doing the same for Sajid Javid. As the sponsor of the bill we feel he has some questions to answer! (Details: [on.fb.me/1N0kuBs](http://on.fb.me/1N0kuBs))

Even without the bill we don't currently have the

right to strike in the UK. We must raise the demand for real democracy in strike ballots — allowing us to run workplace ballots rather than postal ballots.

**We must demand the right to strike over political issues, as the Tories' attacks are political; to strike in solidarity with other workers; and to picket workplaces effectively.**